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Human health and religious practices in Quraan

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According to most well-known religions in the world there are many ways that we could keep our life saved from illness and psychological disorder. The link between bodily health and spiritual health due to religious involvement by a committed person is a general accepted fact and finds a significant favour among the scholars as well. Avicenna a great muslim philosopher and physician admitted and defended the relation between physical and mental health. The aim of this paper is to deal with the relationship between human bodily-mental health and religious involvement. An argument and detail explanation is given that why and how religious involvement by a committed person will warrant human mental and bodily health. This paper while presuming that all world religions are in common in this regards but is limited to Islamic perspective. It will be articulated on the basis of Islamic teachings that praying as a first value advice in Quranic verses and other religious practices play an effective role to warrant human health.

Keywords: : mental, spiritual, Islamic perspective, physical health

1. Introduction

Heading st There are many needs and requirements that human` s life is depended upon it. While there is not full agreement on what exactly human life is depended upon it but doubtless there are many things that our life is suffering from some sort of disorder without fulfilling them. Human needs in general could be categorized two sorts: first the bodily needs and requirements which directly has bearing on the body of man and the second the mental requirements and needs which although have somehow effects on body but directly the soul of man. Of course this categorization presuppose, in some extent, a particular kind of ideology regarding the creation and nature of man and in this paper on the basis of Islamic teachings soul-based understanding of man is featured.

Psychological disorders although are immediately connected to the human mind but indirectly it may cause bodily pain and malfunction. The danger of, no doubt, mental illness is no less than the bodily illness.. Despite the considerable solution found by scholars but still pain and psychological illness is regarded as a common part of human life and this make it necessary that we look for a better way and solution. In many faiths, and religions one could easily find references that describe the connection between faith and fitness. In the bible, one can find "Let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit... (2 Corinthians 7:21)" and " Run with endurance the race that God has set before you... (Hebrews 12:1). In the Quran, one can read " O Mankind: Eat of what is lawful and good on earth (Quran 2:168) and "Eat of the good things we have provided for your substance, but commit no excess therein... (Quran 2:168).

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These faiths as well as others share a common theme that it will be hard to develop spiritually and "do good work" without a healthy body. When one individual fail to have enough bodily exercise more he/she more likely will feel weak and unhealthy which in turn can lead to a weak prayer life caused by stress, or distractions. A weak prayer life can result in the inability to focus, live without fear and or worry.

The writers hold that faith and religion could provide us with a good solution to cure mental illness and it could enhance the life of believer in order to prevent from psychological disorder. So the aim in this paper is to demonstrate the connection between faith and psychological health. I will argue that the connection between faith and health is based on an understanding of human nature. But before to commence discussion; giving a short understanding of mental illness is necessary.

2 -The Nature of mental illness

Mental illness is broadly defined as a disorder that affects a person's cognitive, social, emotional, behavioral state or abilities (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Islam views mental illness as a condition that results from an unbalanced lifestyle (diet, sleeping patterns, spiritual activities, and remembrance of God) or an unbalanced body (Rahman, 1998). Popular beliefs among Muslim cultures view mental illness as: a punishment from God; a result of possession of evil spirits (Jinn); the effects of evil eye; and the effects of evil in objects that are transferred to the individual (the evil is put into the object by someone with malicious intent) (Stein, 2000; Pridmore & Pasha, 2004). Traditionally, Islam does not link all mental illnesses to supernatural causes (Rahman). Furthermore, one of the early Muslim scholars in psychiatric health care, Ibn Sina, rejected the popular notion that mental illnesses originated from evil spirits (Pridmore & Pasha). It is important to note that supernatural causes to illnesses are widely acknowledged and are considered very real within Islam. However, as a Muslim community, we need to recognize mental illness as a legitimate medical condition that is distinct from illnesses of a supernatural nature. In this way, individuals can acknowledge or accept their mental illness and seek treatment with more community support and less stigma associated with their diagnoses.

2 - Religious Perspective of Man

Refer Islam takes a holistic approach to health. Just as religious life is inseparable from secular life, physical, emotional and spiritual health cannot be separated; they are three parts that make a completely healthy person. When one part is injured or unhealthy, the other parts suffer. Theistic-Islamic- perspective displays a particular ontology and anthropology according to which the conditions for the emergence of psychological disorder are ruled out. Religious feature of the world is such a way that the feeling of loneliness and despair is impossible due to the belief in Almighty and all-knowing God. The theist is immune and prevented from despair, dissatisfaction, sadness and so on. His reason in being so is associated with the belief that almighty God is able and enough good to support him beyond his imagination:

Qur'aan, 65, 2-3 ...ومن يتق الله يجعل له مخرجا* ويرزقه من حيث لا يحتسب...

One more verse in Qur'aan displays the same idea according to which the universe is considered in a way that the all-power God could give his kind and limitless support to the believer in any way and conditions beyond the believer's imagination:

....فأتينهم الله من حيث لم يحتسبوا ... (Qur'aan, 59, 2)

In practice also Islamic teachings guide and recommend his adherents so psychological disorder has less chance to emerge. These practices are emphatically advised among which the praying, worshipping and good deed to parents and mankind are considerable. Theses practices warrant human bodily and psychological health. Therefore, according to religion-Islam- faith warrant human health bodily and psychological health are linked together. It should be noted that Avicenna in his books (e.g. *Al-Qanun* and *Al-Shifa'*) is the first who relate the idea of relationship between psychological functioning (particularly cognition) with biological entities (particularly the brain in a detailed manner (Taha, 1995) and thus can be considered the true founder of biological or physiological psychology. But this connection between faith and health is based on particular nature of man. Close contemplation on Islamic source demonstrates that non mechanical notion of man is confirmed and man is not featured as an object

including material parts whose healthy life is fulfilled only through proper relation of his parts rather the human health is connected to and fulfilled by adjustment between bodily and spiritual needs. The Islamic world view contains the totality of human nature and a complete code of human behavior. So, prior to an attempt at appreciating and identifying the principles and methods of Islamic counseling and psychotherapy, we should take into consideration the basic concepts of human nature and potentialities according to the Islamic perspective. According to the Qur'an, man has been sent to this earth as vicegerent of Allah (2:30). This Qur'anic declaration epitomizes man's nature, status and potentialities. As divine vicegerent, man's nature is essentially transcendental and spiritual. His soul also, as a divine agent, is purely rational and possesses an unbounded reserve of divine attributes. However, this spiritual entity of man has been infused into an animal structure (15: 28-29). This interaction of soul with animal body has provided man with significant promises as well as special regards for his personality development. Since man represents the Divine Being, His Fitra, or nature is also good. This is affirmed by the transcendental covenant he made with his lord (7:172). Moreover, as a vicegerent of the absolute sustainers, all the resources of the heavens and the earth have been made subservient to him for his use. Islam views as well that human being is created by Allah with dual nature consisting of biological body (originated from the dust/clay) and soul (originated from spiritual entity) (Qur'an, 23: 12-16). A similar account (but more detailed) has been reported in a *hadith* narrated by narrative sources such as Bukhari (Vol. 9, Book 93, No. 546). When the spirit enters the lifeless body, it governs the body and interacts with various biological and environmental variables to produce behaviors and mental processes. It is even mentioned in the story of Adam's (PBUH) creation and his nature that human being has a unique *human* biological make-up (Qur'an, 7:11). However the central idea of biological psychology in Islam is that soul play an important role in the interactive relationship between biology and environment in the form of spiritual level or *faith*. Closely related to the soul, is the spiritual organ, the Qalb or the heart. The Qalb is the supersensory organ responsible for higher cognitive functions, i.e., the realization of the ultimate reality, values, meaning and purpose in life. The Qur'anic verses and hadith confirm the cognitive functions of the heart: for the example, "Have they, then, never journeyed about this earth, letting their hearts gain wisdom and causing their ears to hear! Yet verily, it is not their eyes that have become blind, but blind have become their hearts that are in their breasts (Qur'an 22:46). There are three major stages of personality development: An-nafs al-ammarah bilsu (12:53); An-nafs al-lawwamah (75:2). And An-nafs al-mutmainnah (89:72). At the lowest level of an-nafs al ammarah, that is, the impelling self, animal instincts and passions dominate in man. This has a paralyzing effect on higher cognitive processes of the heart. The behavior at this stage of an-nafs al-lawwamah is the reproaching self, characterized by thoughtfulness and self-centeredness. The second stage of an-nafs al-lawwamah is the reproaching self, characterized by constant awareness. The self in this stage is engaged in a continuous striving to get rid of baser desires through constant examination in the light of reasoning. This stage maybe prelude to man's transition to the final stage of al-nafs al-mutmainnah, the self at peace with the Divine Will; the realization of the Ultimate Reality and freedom from sensuous desires at this stage, emancipates man's soul from all kinds of influences alien to his nature. Thus, personality is now free to develop and actualize all its latent attributes and potentialities along the line of his natural pattern. However, during this long course of development, man is not left alone in a vacuum of formlessness.

2. Conclusion

Islamic teachings like the others big religions in the world present obviously mind-body theory concerning human being. According to this perspective man is identified with soil and soul along with their specific needs and requirements. To satisfy the needs of any of them is to follow a particular kind of rules and to take it into serious care. As any considerable wrong or dissatisfaction of bodily needs result in bodily disorder the same goes with soul. Meanwhile the mere submission of man in bodily requirement leads to psychological disorder too. Once such understanding regarding man is followed then due to the connection between mind and body there is an effective relationship between faith and health. This view was made by Avicenna, great Muslim philosopher and physician who had applied in practice as well. Therefore it is not our duty to care only the body and to satisfy its requirements rather a very mysterious aspect of human being called as soul needs to be cared seriously and any break in this duty

could result in incurable ailing. Religions by notions such as faith and worship give a considerable solution and protective service and care to human soul.

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